

ment, the internal floor plan arrangement remains constant until the breakdown of the folk building tradition toward the end of the nineteenth century. In its ability to assimilate stylistic aspects of the major shifts in architectural design, folk housing was able to meet Utah's needs for both external appearance and internal comfort. While pioneer buildings have often been characterized as austere and spartan, it seems that the Mormon people took to heart Brigham Young's admonition to "build beautiful houses"<sup>25</sup> and whenever possible chose the adorned over the plain.

Decoration within the folk tradition is confined to designated areas on the building's outward fabric. On the gables, eaves, dormers, and entrances, builders could experiment with the frivolities of fashion without jeopardizing the successful appearance of the house. Folk housing in the United States generally adheres to a formal arrangement and symmetrical composition traceable to the dramatic influence of the Georgian architectural style on Colonial America.<sup>26</sup> Directed by the Georgian preference for visual order and rhythmical balance, Utah folk builders, like their counterparts in other sections of the country, manipulated decorative elements in such a way as to make them compatible with the discipline exerted by these governing stylistic principles.

As new architectural fashions emerged from the architect's sketchbook, they were quickly inspected for decorative features appropriate to the folk repertoire. The Federal style lent a shallow, low-pitched roof to the builder's book, but it changed the shape of the house only slightly. The colossal columns and pedimented gables of the Greek Revival were rejected at the folk level, but a scaled-down version of the Greek Temple Form house became a part of the Mormon New England tradition and can be found in Utah.<sup>27</sup> Folk builders regularly used Greek Revival-inspired entablature, pediment-shaped window heads, and plain cornice returns on traditional house types (Fig. 52). The visual complexity associated with the picturesque Gothic Revival style was translated by folk carpenters into a simple center facade gable, symmetrically incorporated into the older house plan.<sup>28</sup> Spired finials and intricately cut bargeboards were other Gothic Revival ornaments popularly incorporated into the Utah folk style (Fig. 52A). Later nineteenth-century styles, often lumped together rather casually under the term *Victorian*, are rarely found in the folk repertoire, though some Victorian details like gable shingling show up in later folk designs (Fig. 52B).

Most of the ideas for decorative work were disseminated in the countryside through popularly oriented house "pattern books." Such books, really builders' manuals, contained house plans, decorative ideas, and landscaping suggestions. If the builder was attracted by a particular geegaw or filigree in these catalogs, it was or-

dered from a local mill specializing in such decorations. Folk architecture does not exist in a cultural vacuum; people in early Utah were exposed to progressive movements in architecture through a wide variety of books and newspapers, not to mention firsthand accounts of travelers to Salt Lake City and the East.<sup>29</sup> Yet the willingness to accept the new was tempered by its reconciliation with the old.<sup>30</sup> Innovation was tolerated, but only to an extent that left the line of tradition unbroken.

The folk buildings encountered in Utah which have some, but not all, of the characteristics of certain recognized architectural styles should not be seen as incomplete and naive renderings of the high-style designs, but rather as the complicated culmination of a vigorous dialogue between the old and the new, the conservative and the innovative.<sup>31</sup> Decoration plays an important role in Utah folk architecture as underscored by the multifaceted visual treatment of dormers (Figs. 55A-F). How a house is decorated is one part of a complex system of house composition. The folk house is not a simple repetition of an old form—it is a consciously designed entity composed from a design inventory file in the builder's memory.

*House Design: Complex Event.* Beginning from a base concept—the floor plan—the house rises to completion as a series of decisions that the builder makes about size, height, roof orientation, window placement, and decoration." The choices are reached by the builder through the application of a series of designing rules—rules which gain authority by their compatibility with the prevailing traditional aesthetic.<sup>35</sup> Confronted with unlimited possibilities for what the house might look like, designing rules are intended to narrow the field of choice to insure that the house, when finished, will look "right." The rules allow the builder freedom but at the same time place a ceiling on the number of potential selections. For example, assume that a builder in St. George was contemplating a new house. After choosing the basic floor plan, his next step would be to decide the orientation of the roof. Within the Utah tradition the ridge of the roof may be placed either parallel or perpendicular to the public space (usually the street), but never at an angle. The St. George carpenter chooses a parallel ridgeline type and then proceeds to questions about the height of his new dwelling. The folk repertoire contains rules for one-, one-and-a-half-, two-, and two-and-a-half-story buildings. Depending upon his pocketbook, the builder makes a choice. Similar processes determine the placement of chimneys, the arrangement of the front door and window, and the application of decorative elements.

Obviously there is no set order for the consideration of the designing rules, but all are brought into action before the house is completed. The rules bring order to chaos



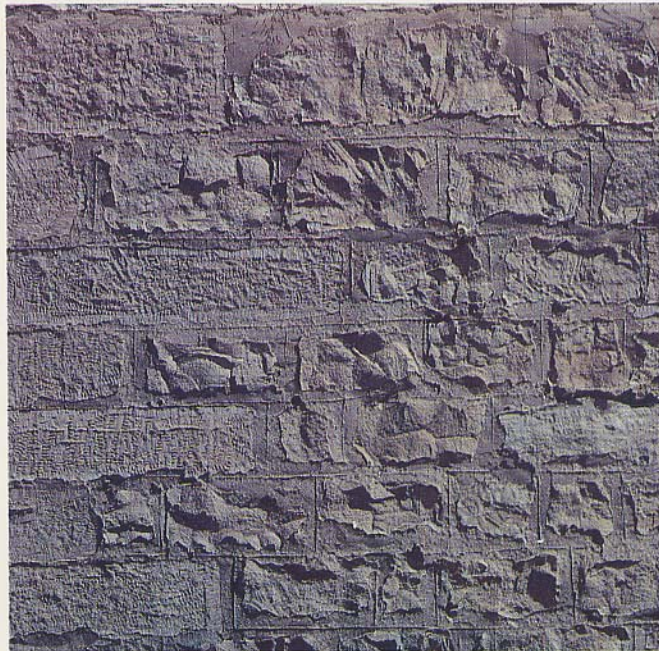
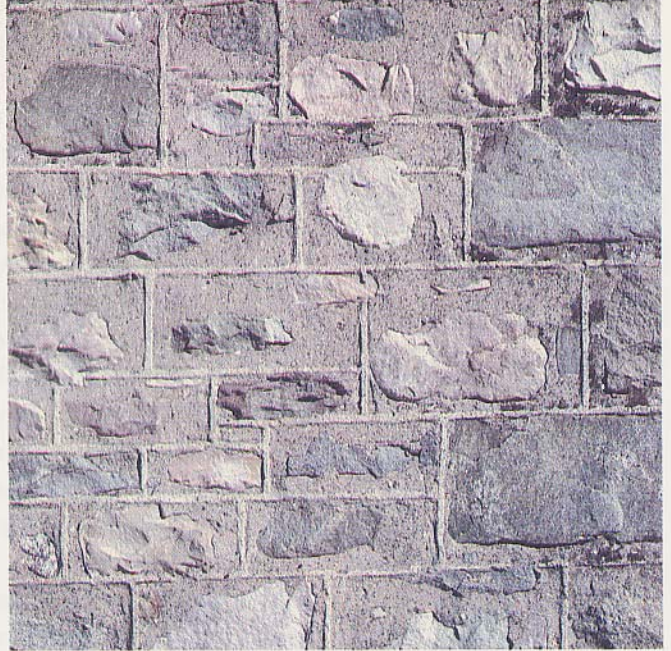






Fig. 48 (upper left, facing page)

"Bricking" over adobe.

Spring City.

The technique of applying colored plaster over adobe was common in all parts of Utah where sun-dried brick was utilized. The smooth plaster was scored to simulate brick and stone.

Fig. 49

House exteriors.

Early settlers in Utah utilized a variety of stone in house building. The preference for geometric regularity guided the masons' hands.

(A: upper right, facing page)  
Coursed granite masonry, Willard.

(B: lower left, facing page)  
Raised coursing over regular limestone, Manti.

(C: lower right, facing page)  
Raised joints over irregular volcanic stone, Beaver  
(Thomas Frazer's decorative "Scottish" masonry.)

Fig. 50

Log House with plaster covering. Spring City.

The willow lathe suggests that the plaster is an early and integral part of the house design.

